continue such supplies for any unlimited period without giving room for complaints. Even if such a thing was feasible, the Member thought it advantageous to put a stop to it. He observed that, according to the Director of Agriculture, the cultivation of about 1,25,000 acres of land with paddy every year would yield the entire quantity of paddy required for the people of the State, while in G. O. No. L. R. 930, dated 8th February 1920, Government had resolved that 2,000 acres of land in the Devicolam Division, certain *kari* lands near the Thottapalli lock and portions of certain *kayals* should be made available for registry so as to enable people to raise paddy cultivation. That area was too small. There were still available areas in various taluks which were suitable for paddy cultivation. He suggested that—

(1) the portions of Reserved Forerts adjoining inhabited localities and suitable for paddy cultivation should be thrown open for cultivation and registered in the names of poor persons ;

(2) an area of not less than 10,000 acres from the Rani Reserved Forest lying to the north of the Azhutha River and comprised in Survey Nos. 379/1 C. 12, 385/1, 385/D and 384/5 ; and

(3) the lands comprised in Survey Nos. 379/1 C and 372/1 (excepting 1,300 acres proposed to be reserved) and 780/1 in the Kanjirapalli *pakuthi* should be registered in small blocks in the names of persons without allowing companies to take registry of the same in big blocks.

Dewan's reply.—Noted.

(3) Salt.

22. Development of the manufacture of local salt and the creation of a separate department for the same.

Mr. M. Sivathanu Pillai (Member, Agastiswaram taluk) represented that the arrangements for the manufacture and sale of salt in the State were not satisfactory. Though the area fit for salt culture and sufficient to yield the quantity of salt required for consumption in the State was available, enough had not been done to increase the output of indigenous salt. The manufacturers of salt were not given adequate encouragement and inducements and they therefore showed great reluctance in taking up more areas for salt culture. The *alloms* that had been used for the manufacture of salt were not permitted to be utilised for the purpose. The Member pointed out that 400 *pans* in the Puthalam which had yielded about 10,000 *maunds* of salt per annum and 100 *pans* belonging to Avadhanikal which had been producing about 5,000 *maunds* of salt every year were allowed to lie idle. Want of equal treatment to all persons engaged in the manufacture of salt and also the existence of differences in the prices allowed to the salt produced by them accounted for the decrease in the production of local salt. The maintenance of the old *alloms* was not attended to and consequently many *alloms* had become useless. For the above reasons the revenue derived from the sale of local salt had decreased very much. The difficulties and cost of transport of foreign salt from Bombay and Tuticorin into the State had of late increased very much and resulted in an additional burden on the poor people. In some parts of the State salt was easily procurable, while in other parts the price was very high and the available salt was also not of good quality. Formerly, a bag of good salt weighing 2 *maunds* used to sell at a uniform rate of Rs. $3\frac{3}{4}$ throughout the State. At present the prices of foreign salt and local salt differed greatly. Even the people of the Trivandrum and Padmanabhapuram Divisions who purchased salt direct from the places of manufacture were made to pay transport charges. Such a procedure was really unjustifiable and appeared to be in contravention of the conditions laid down in the Interportal Trade Convention. On the other hand, it afforded ample facilities for certain salt contractors to make undue and illegal profit. The present manufacture of local salt was under the control of Departmental Officers and subordinates, who were ignorant of the work entrusted to them. The keen competition among the persons engaged in the manufacture of salt seriously hampered the production of local salt.

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The Member then submitted details regarding the production of salt in the Thamarakulam *allom* before and after placing the *alloms* under the control of the Excise Department. The total area of the *alloms* was subsequently extended to 355 acres and the average output per cent was 16 *maunds* per annum The total quantity of salt consumed in the State every year was about 10 lakh's of *maunds*. If the existing area of 355 acres and the additional area of 130 acres to be opened could be made to yield salt at the rate of 33 *maunds* per, one cent, the entire quantity required for the use of the State could be found. Compared with Northern India and other Native States in India, Travancore had greater facilities for the manufacture of salt. The facilities afforded by Government for opening the land in the centre of Manakudi *kayal* which were under water were really praiseworthy. But the attitude of the Excise officers and subordinates was highly unsympathetic. The Excise Commissioner did not pay frequent visits to the *alloms* and give necessary advice and timely help to the owners of the *alloms*. For want of necessary help, the Variyoor *allom* was stopped and in spite of repeated petitions to Government nothing had been done to revive its working. There was an offer from a wealthy individual to work the Variyoor *allom* and deliver not less than 5,00,000 *maunds* every year and also furnish a security of Rs. 5,000 for its proper working. But the offer was rejected.

The Member then, pointed out that, if certain improvements were done for leaving a waterway 1,000 ft. in length for the flow of water from the Pazhayar into the sea through the Manakudi *Kayal*, the area available for the manufacture of salt could be increased severalfold and assigned in the names of private individuals and the loss incurred by the owners of the *alloms* on account of the excess water in the rainy season could be avoided. Such improvement work would also afford great relief to the poor people who lived in huts on the banks of the *kayal* and who were forced to desert their homes in times of flood.

In conclusion, the Member submitted the following suggestions for the consideration of Government:—

(1) A separate Salt Department should be organised with an expert at its head.

(2) The upkeep and maintenance of the *alloms* should be attended to by Government at an early date.

(3) Arrangements should be made to allow all the manufacturers equal profit.

(4) Necessary and timely advice and sufficient encouragement should be given to the manufacturers.

(5) Salt of superior quality should be sold at a cheap and uniform rate throughout the State.

Dewan's reply.—Noted.

(4) EXCISE AND CUSTOMS.

23. Certain suggestions for the better administration of the Excise Department.

Mr. M. K. Govinda Pillai B. A., B. L. (Member, Trivandrum taluk) objected to too much of centralisation of power and authority in the Head of the Department, especially after the departmental reorganisation of 1084. The result is that he was not able to devote adequate attention to the more important matters connected with the adminstration of the Department, but much of his time was frittered away in small things, such as making appointments, granting leave, etc. The work of a Departmental Head had to be supervised and his efficiency tested by the Huzur Office through his diaries. So far as the Excise Department was concerned, the information of the Member was that the diaries of the Commissioner were not being submitted regularly and in time. They were sent up for several months together. Similarly, the Excise Commissioner also did not insist on the punctual submission of diaries to him by the Assistant Excise Commissioners and Circle Officers or examine them properly. The inspection work done by the Excise Commissioner was only in connection with his tours for abkari sales. There was no real

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